1: Tew . E-6 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

Kangombe, used to persuade Nyanja to help in the matrilineal rite. When Kapeni in turn fled to Mount Sochi from the Ngoni, and died there, the Yao addressed their offerings to him, not to Kangombe.[1] The word *Mulungu* has sometimes been interpreted to mean Supreme Being, God, Creator, but among the Yao it seems not to have a personal connotation. It was used to describe the agent in any mysterious event,[2] or the place where the ancestor spirits (*mzimba*) were supposed to dwell. Daily life was full of acts of respect towards the ancestors, who were regarded as jealous of the living, and requiring constant propitiation.[3]

Sorcery

Accusations of witchcraft and measures for dealing with it play a dominant role in Yao social life. With certain exceptions nearly all diseases and deaths are thought to be caused by sorcery. The exceptional causes are: the hand of God, old age, the transgression of certain taboos, and battle wounds. *If sorcery is suspected the relatives of* the sick or dead man *consult the diviner to identify the offender.*

Yao (in common with the Maravi and many peoples of Central Africa) believe that sorcerers have a craving for human flesh, which they satisfy by killing with magic the victims of their malice and hatred. They acquire their magical powers by an apprenticeship, which might include incestuous relations with mother, sister, or mother-in-law, or sleeping on the grave of the mother for one night. The sorcerer then learns the medicines and finally demonstrates his power by killing a young relative by magic; he waits till the victim is buried, and then magically exhumes him for the secret feast with his fellow sorcerers. Each sorcerer who shares the flesh owes a debt to the one who secured the victim.

Charms are used as preventive measures against sorcery. When a diviner has diagnosed the cause of death as sorcery, retaliatory measures are taken. The headman of the village could either call in the witchfinder to identify the offender or he could call in the diviner to take action against all the sorcerers in the village. After the diviner, Mahindile, had revealed the guilty ones, they were challenged to take the poison ordeal to prove their innocence. If they died, the proof and the punishment were simultaneously accomplished. If they survived, the diviner was held to have been at fault and they were acquitted. The witch doctor was supposed to entice sorcerers to the graveside, and slay them with magic more powerful than their own.

The diviner's findings are to-day checked by the poison ordeal administered to a chicken. A sorcerer detected in this way might be asked to provide medicine for the man whose sickness he had caused, or after a death he might be compelled to pay compensation. If the accused is a village headman, he will not be summoned before a chief, but his brother will take the villagers away from the sphere of his influence, or he may be chased away from the district. Accusations of sorcery follow certain regular lines. Nearly all accusations fall on relatives. Diviners are consulted by matrilineal relatives of the sick or dead person, and the man most usually accused is the brother of the accuser, or the husband of his sister. Witchcraft is therefore a manner of expressing the hostilities latent in these relations, which are, in the Yao social system, full of tension.

[1] Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 70.
[2] Hobley, 1922, pp. 14–15; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 58–73, 204–13.
[3] Hetherwick, J., 1920.

THE WATAO OF EVARALAND

III

777
774
826
539

48. *A child*, when one of its milk teeth drops out, stands some few yards away facing the door of the hut and throws the tooth over the roof of the hut, saying:

"*Ai khonjele* [illegible] *chini, ndumi* [illegible] *kwa*"
"*Oh! mice take your tooth, give me* [illegible] *of good sort*"

771

Religion. The matter of the religious beliefs professed by natives of East Central Africa is one beset with many difficulties to the student of today. It has been the subject of many essays by workers in the missionary field, but the wide contact of the natives of Nyasaland with missionary effort during the past thirty years has done much to confuse the problem, and one finds that many missionaries in their writings rather color the picture with their own feelings.

771
761
774

I think probably the Tao with whom I am now concerned have a truer conception of their own beliefs than many of the subject tribes among whom mission teaching has more easily taken root. The religious beliefs of a people are to a large extent the reflection of the circumstances under which that people lives. The outstanding event to all natives is death. At death, something is lost to the body, without which life is impossible. This is the *nsimo* which may be translated "soul" or "spirit." The *nsimo* is said to leave the body of the dying man when he becomes moribund or unconscious. It appears that this same *nsimo* may leave the body during unconscious states unconnected with death, as when a man faints, in epilepsy, and during sleep.

774

Apart from this evidence of the dissociation of the *nsimo* from the living body, the Tao believe that a man's shadow is an objective manifestation of the soul and they will say "*the shadow is the nsimo.*" Fear is experienced if a man jumps on the shadow of his fellow. Light is also thrown on the constitution of the *nsimo* by the belief in a certain evil-spirit which dwells in deep pools. It is called *shimala-mani*, which means "one who may finish (drink up) all the water." The superstition regarding this evil spirit is that it can suck the blood from your shadow as you stand at the edge of the pool, till you become so weak that you fall in and are drowned.

774
776

775

After leaving the body at death, the *nsimo* goes to take up its place in the spirit-world, occupying a position corresponding to that held by the man during his life. With a truly materialistic assumption, the soul is supposed to have all the attributes of the dead man, to be wealthy in proportion as the man was so on earth, and its relative position will be identical with that which he held among the living. The tribal *chief* becomes a paramount *chief* in the spirit world, the lesser *chiefs* holds sway in his lesser capacity, etc. We shall see that in intercession, when the tribe is threatened with calamities, it is the late paramount *chief* who is appealed to for help, and when one headed *chief* is at war with another, the *chief's* dead predecessor will be called upon for aid. When a village is moved, it is from the spirit of the dead headman of the village that success in the enterprise is sought. Similarly, in family troubles, some dead ancestor is entreated to set things right, while a native

setting out on a journey may ask the intercession of his deceased father to ensure his safe conduct.

The spirits of the dead are in general said to dwell "above." They haunt the graveyard or visit the scenes of their life, and may be associated with natural objects or with certain animals, into which they are supposed to enter temporarily. Thus a dead man's spirit will visit the earth mound which marks the site of his old house in the village. The spirits of headmen are often thought to haunt the big trees of the village open space; such trees are held sacred for this reason. Some time ago in the old village of the chief, Mulenya, a party of women cut down one of these trees for firewood, ignorant of its sacred character. With the crash of the falling tree, they became frightened, and one of the present Mulenya's wives came upon the scene, proclaiming all kinds of evil to follow unless reparations were made to the insulted spirits of the dead chiefs. The remains of the tree lie there to this day, untouched except by natural decay.

To quote another example, near a lurking pool called *japumbi* (from *ku-jipa*, to bathe, and *mbi*, the initiates) where boys bathe after initiation, on the Dumazi river, there is a small eminence whence a cloud of spray rises and a continued rumbling sound comes forth. Here, the old men say, you can hear the drumming of the spirits, while you may see pythons and the crowing cobra in whose bodies the spirits live.

As I have already mentioned, the spirit-world so far as the native has speculated on the problem is "above" in a semi-materialistic heaven. If questioned closely, the phrase "I do not know" will figure largely in his replies. He will not say there is any "marriage or giving in marriage." If a child dies, they often say, "*Ku-ambwa* (some deceased person) wants a voice-carrier." Indeed they often use a phrase under the circumstances identical with an English expression, "They are calling away the children."

Natives attribute to the spirits of the dead the power to partake of anything on this earth, such as food. They have no exact ideas with regard to animals and what happens to them when they die. They will not tell you that an animal has an essence but at the same time, a goat is often killed at a funeral, with the remark, "The goat will follow the dead man." The goat's meat will be eaten by those assisting at the funeral; hence there is the suggestion of the idea that animals' spirits do go to the spirit-world.

In referring to the spirit-world, the native generally uses the word *ku-mulungu*, and here we have the second element in their religious beliefs, namely a supreme being. *Ku-mulungu* means at the place of or with *mulungu*, the supreme being. *Mulungu*, however, takes a very secondary place to the *mizimu*. He is referred to only in a general way. In answer to such questions as why has a woman an albino child born to her, she will say "*Mulungu* made it so"; in fact in reply to many questions to which the native has no answer, he will use practically our English phrase, "Oh, God knows!" and with about as much meaning.

To *Mulungu* is ascribed the sending of the rain, but apparently he has no part in giving good crops or causing a plentiful harvest, neither has he any direct interest in man's affairs,

one is for "God the creator," of man or earth. He, however, receives the spirits of the dead. Should he refuse to do so, a man continues to live. When a child has recovered from some excessively fatal disease, the natives say, "*Mulungu wakamula* (refused him)!" or if he has been very near to death and then recovers, they say "*Mulungu wamenda* (spat him out)".

It would thus appear that among the spirit hosts there is a regular line of precedence, and presiding over all is a supreme being, but all this is so remote as to have little importance for the living. The vagueness concerning *Mulungu*, I must admit, has given rise to some doubt in my own mind as to how far he was a deity with an entity of his own in their religion at a little time ago.

Ancestors tend to be forgotten in proportion to the length of time which has elapsed since their death, unless they played some important part during their lives: then some particular one may be remembered to the exclusion of others, and to him prayers of intercession are offered. In the case of *chiefs*, the names of a long line of rulers may be remembered on occasions when all else about them has fallen into oblivion. It seems possible originally *Mulungu* was the oldest ancestral chief who was raised up as a supreme being but who, in the process, has lost all other attributes. On the other hand, the word often refers only to the place where the spirits dwell; this may have been the original meaning.

There is no religious worship in the proper sense of the term but only propitiation, prayer for intercession, and return of thanks for favors granted. The keynote of this ancestor worship, the sum total of their religion to the exclusion of the belief in a supreme being, is fear. We have seen at the funeral that everything is done to lay the spirit at rest. The people wish never to hear of the spirit again. It is chiefly with a view of averting some evil that worship takes place or with a view of enjoining some crime that sacrifice is made or to alleviate some suffering that communication is sought with the spirits. It is a question of, "Do us no harm, do not vent your wrath upon us for what we have left undone," rather than "Keep us from doing evil, save us from being our own enemies." It would appear to be a religion of spite, not of love and kindness, though there are glimmerings of a search after "a heart to guide and protect," as in the prayer given below and also in the action taken when removing a village.

As a corollary of this system of ancestor worship, there is no real priesthood. A man asks for favors for himself; the head of a family petitions a deceased father or some more remote ancestor of greater importance; the headman intercedes on behalf of the village with the spirit of a predecessor; a chief takes the place of high priest on the occasion of a tribal supplication to a former ruler, though he may be replaced by some one of his wise men who acts as intermediary.

Some form of sacrifice is offered with the prayer, and often some omen is sought as a sign that the prayer is granted. For this purpose, flour made from millet called *mbepesi* (*nsendo*, Chin.) is commonly used. The word *mbepesi* probably includes any sacrificial offerings.

never leave any food outside at night, not even the shell from the grain she has been pounding, but these most miserable of beings is attracted by it.

Chinese is a word common to several tribes and among them appears to have various shades of meaning. Among the Wayao, the Jews are "the little people" of the Ngoondoonee order. They rob the gardens and swear not among the pumpkins; their little footprints can be seen where they have passed hither and thither; fruits and vegetables that they touch will become bitter. To prevent these disasters, the Yao, at the time when their crops are ripening, place different kinds of vegetables at cross-roads, hoping thereby to satisfy the Jews and prevent them coming into the gardens. As far as I can ascertain, the Jews have nothing to do with famine and are in no way connected with *Mlungu*, to be mentioned below, as Mandenukili believed.[1] The chinese is variously said to be "like a man but rather like an animal." He has two legs but goes on all fours.

The Yao describe another legendary race of "little people" who used to live in this country and who may still be met with, — "who kissed?" They were of a very small stature, grew long beards, were very wooly, quarrelsome, and fierce, and carried spears. When anybody met one, he was immediately asked: "*Mwenkonde kanje?*", "From how far did you see me?" and it was always well to pretend to have seen the little man coming a long way off and make him believe he was considered quite a big person; if you said "Hullo, I have only just spotted you!", he would immediately spear you. They are commonly supposed to dwell on the tops of high mountains and are iron workers. They are called the *Mwenkonde kanje*.

There is no relation so far as I know between these two classes of "little people," but I think these stories go to uphold the theory recently reiterated by Hastings Gulliford in his Huxleyian Lectures (1914) that folk-lore fables of hobgoblins, etc., have a basis in fact. He believes that dwarf races at one time were to be found, possibly over a very wide area of the globe. In this country, I think it may be that one sees the transition from historical facts to true fairy stories.

The Anyanja have the same legend about these "little people," the *mumdi mwenkoli* ("whose-child-you-are-me"); it is indeed not only wide-spread throughout this country, (the Akonjo and Ankonde in North Nyasa district speak of the *mwendiwewendo* who ask the same question), but there is a very similar legend among the Akikuyu in British East Africa.[2]

The *chinese* is doubtless the *chirumi* of the Anyanja, mentioned in Scott's dictionary,[3] as Miss Werner[4] has supposed, for one finds that among the Anyanja at the southern end of the Protectorate, the *chinese* is described as having only one side to his body so that he is invisible when viewed from the off side, thus resembling the *chirumi* who has one half of his body made of wax.

[1] Op. cit., vol. I, p. 11. [2] H. W. H. Beech, 'Two Years' campaign in East Africa,' (Hine, London, 1914, p. 40-41).
[3] Op. cit., p. 96. [4] British Central Africa, op. cit., p. 48.

S. Stevenson D-6 Soc. 1910] 1922 FFT Yao FFT

Lumbo Mlanga is the prophet of Isoma, a man of great height who walks the round of the country, stopping from hill-top to hill-top along "the fairy way," the "*Mlivo wa Lumbo Mlanga*," which is supposed to run right around Nyasaland and never to cross a river, starting and ending somewhere near the junction of the Shiré with the Zambezi river. As he goes, he can be seen from a hundred miles away. He carries the *Isilimbo* instrument and plays as he walks, singing:

"*Ndiwo* ... *mapo* ... *lumpapo* ... *lumlapo mapo* ... *mwimwiko mwimwiko mwe*"
"You my cat (in trouble) with the midges therefore I must roll up the mats, this season of famine!"

which might be rendered, "You people grumble about small troubles, as I will teach you to know better by inflicting great ones." When he is seen, there will be famine.

It will be convenient here to allude briefly to some of the beliefs connected with meteorological phenomena, as some of them have a bearing on native religious beliefs. The remarks made under this heading for the *Anyanja* hold good for the Yao. The morning and evening stars are called *Nyenidoko* and *Nyenyedzinga*, the good cook and the bad cook. They are looked upon as the two wives of the moon, one of whom feeds him so well that he grows fat, the other who does not, so he wastes away. The constellation of the Pleiades is called *Nimiku*; the Milky Way, *Lichinga wanthu*, "the watcher of the night," when high in the heavens, dawn is near. When shooting stars are seen, natives exclaim "*mwapo mbuyu!*" *Mwapo* is a many-pointed arrow. Eclipses are recognized but no explanation is vouchsafed. Thunder is supposed to be the noise of rain falling in the heavens before it reaches the earth. The rain is sometimes supposed to be the condensing steam from an enormous pot of water boiling over a furnace fire in heaven. The lightning is conceived as a lizard-like animal which dwells in the clouds and darts out from behind them and comes to earth and breaks up trees and may kill a man. Mice is supposed by the Yao to be its excrement. The animal is called *Njoni*, and is the same as *Mpumbu* of the Ashipeta who consider the rain to be the broken egg-shell of the lightning dragons' eggs. There is a large red campanulate lily, a species of *Haemanthus* also called *Njoni*, which is in some way connected with the lightning. No Yao child would ever touch this flower. Children are always advised never to seek shelter under a big tree but always to make for a bamboo thicket, for if the lightning strikes the bamboo and splits it, it will get caught inside the hollow stem.

Gales of wind are said to emanate from a plant called *Chanyola*. It is described as having two prongs like an elephant's trunk and others like two fingers. It is found on the tops of very high mountains, growing alone and surrounded by bare rock. This plant is used by medicine men to gain supernatural powers. *Chanyola* is also the name of a parasitic plant on the charcoal tree in Nyasaland.

The world is taken by the natives as they find it; to them no explanation for its being is necessary. So far as I can find out, there is no idea among the Yao of a Creator. The

776 origin of mankind is explained in a story given elsewhere; *Mulungu* takes no part, nor is
773 the supernatural even invoked in explanation.

781 The religion of the Tso may thus be summed up as somewhat wooden-plus an ill-defined, essentially belief in a supreme being. Their religion is not animistic. There are certain spirits of evil, demons, fairies and supernatural beings and animals which, however, do not play any real part in their religious beliefs.

531 **Native Sayings.** Natives are very fond of sayings, many of which are of the same nature as our own proverbs. The meaning of many of them is, however, not always self-evident but depends on some little story with a moral.

The following are some of those which I have collected among the Tso near Sesheke:

1. *Akamuzile likandalala'* (or *kipalala*)
   He caught a fish, (a serpent)

An expression meaning "He slipped down." The variations being used when wet or when dry under foot.

2. *Tlamba ali a'mesa'*
   Cunning is in the eye (evident).

An expression meaning "Look out; some one is after us!"

   Kalula shinjani'
   Rabbit in shroud

This is a Mang'anja equivalent to the above.

3. *Chimpyelewa mwakhalakala mwipanda'*
   A thing that did not know they cooked in among the herbs!

An insect which had not listened to advice about the dangers of sitting on herbs used as vegetables, was gathered up by a woman and cooked with them.
An expression used with the sense "If you do not take advice and anything happens to you, it will be your own fault."

4. *Mlolo ali a'mapikanda'*
   Medicine is in the navel

Meaning "You are forewarned; it is your own look out!"

5. *Wangakwanda mwakalala chikalakasa'*
   Mr World-Be-Clever they left with the skull!

Ku-kalanda, to be clever (to show off); an expression made to a newcomer who unbidden joins in a discussion. It has reference to the following story and means that anyone joining a party unbidden may find himself in an awkward situation. Some strangers came to a village, and after being given food and quarters, all retired for the night. One of them, however, Mr. World-Be-Clever, hearing something going on outside crept out of the house to find out what was happening. Seeing some people playing at catch-ball, he

9: Hatherwick M-S (ca. 1936) 1952 FTT Tan FTT

with the dead. He approaches the shrine, opens the gate of the fence, takes a 769
gratful of bear and passes it into the pot on the head of the grave. Next he places
the basket of porridge and the plate of meat on the second bastile in and retires.
Kneeling down outside the gate facing the shrine and a few yards in front of the
people he chants his prayer in a monotone, each petition commencing with "Chembe,
chembe," "Please, please." All the while the people clap their hands in unison
with him and sing the response as they do in a native case in the chief's court.

When the offering has been made at the grave, the rest of the beer or other [635]
food is consumed by the worshippers. Grass are food as a token of respect to the
dead, and the rest of the day is spent in dancing.

Such shrines are to be seen in almost every Tana village where the inhabitants 778
have been located for any length of time. They are regarded with awe—the little 769
boys as they pass whisper to each other in a warning tone, "mambo." Should the
village be moved to any other district, the old shrine is not forgotten. Periodical
visits are made to it with the usual offerings. In cases where the old home has
been occupied by a people hostile to the old inhabitants, such visits are usually
made during the night, and the people awake in the morning to feel that the old
chief's grave in their midst has been newly repaired, and a fresh offering of food
placed on its head.

Sometimes such shrines are found on the mountain of hills which once may
have been a refuge from the enemy in time of war, but which now lie bare and
deserted. Thither in their need the people make their way with their offering of
food and beer, and their prayer for rain or suitable weather for the crops. Near
Mbuzyra such shrines are to be seen on the tops of Mount Sudzi and Mount
Mishiro. The former is the abode of the spirit of Kankhomba, and the latter of
Mpelule, both old Mawezi or Mang'anja chiefs who doubtless died there seeking
safety from the war of the invading Tana, and died leaving their wounds to be the
mulungu or spirit of the mountain. Some years ago, during the time of an Angoni
invasion, the Tana of Mount Sudzi fled to the hill-top for refuge, and there the
old chief Kapasi died. He was buried close to the grave of the old Kankhomba,
and now, when the Tana on Sudzi make an offering, it is to the spirit of Kapasi
that the homage is paid, and the shrine of Kankhomba lies neglected.

Only the graves of chiefs or headmen are thus treated as shrines of worship 554
The burying place of slaves and the common people lies away in the thick bush, 769
where only the rank grass or the thicket of old trees marks the spot. No offerings 769
are ever taken there, for such as are buried there can have no influence in the 778
spirit world. The dead are buried, the broken pot or basket is left on the grave to
mark the spot, and none ever seek to go there save to lay another in the same
neglected ground.

II. But the word mulungu is used by the Tana with a wider application. 776 ●
Etymologically the word is connected with the root kulungwa, which in so many 197
of the other branches of the Bantu tongue appears as kulu or kuru, and signifies 192
"great" or "old." It is the same root which appears in the Kaffir word for God,

Unkulunkulu, which may therefore be rendered as "The old, old One," or "The great, great One." A like rendering may be given of the Zulu form uvelingi, the "Old One," or the "Great One." In this or a modified form uvelingi (Dwalili) it appears in all the Kaffir group of the Bantu tongue as the equivalent for "God" (see Father Tennant's *Comparative Grammar of South African Bantu Languages*). To trace in as Father Tennant does any connection with Moloch, the god of the Phœnicians, is to stretch native weight to a chance coincidence of sounds.

As we have already seen, the word uvelingi is applied to the human limbs when regarded as an object of worship, or as an inhabitant of the spirit world. But it is also used to denote that spirit world in general, or more properly speaking, the aggregate of the spirits of all the dead. The plural form of the word is rarely heard, unless when the allusion is made to the souls in their individualities. In its native use and form the word does not imply personality, for it does not belong to the personal class of nouns. Etymologically it is classed with the leg, heart, arm, head, etc., of the human frame. Its form denotes rather a state or property inhering in something, as the life or health inhering in the body. Among the various tribes where the word is in use as we have described, the missionaries have adopted it as the term for "God." But the untaught Yao refuses to assign to it any idea of being or personality. It is to him more a quality or family of the human nature whose significance he has extended so as to embrace the whole spirit world. Even after I had endeavoured to impress on old Yao headmen with the personality of the Godhead in the Christian sense of the term, using the term *Mulungu*, my listener began to talk of "Our Mulungu," "Mr. God," showing that originally to him the word conveyed no idea of the personality I was ascribing to it.

And yet the Yao approaches closely to the idea of personality and a personal being, when he speaks of what uvelingu has done and is doing. It is uvelingu who made the world, and man, and animals. Far in the interior of the continent, toward the north-west, beyond the plains and swamps of the Lemgwe River and Lake Bangweulu, there lies, in Yao legend, an island in the midst of a lake called Kapitilinya. On that island there is to be seen a large flat rock marked by the footprints of men and animals of all kinds. When that rock was once a lump of moist clay, uvelingu created all living things and sent them across the salt water, where their footprints remained to afterwards harden into the imperishable rock. Such is the Yao legend of the creation of the world, and uvelingu is always the Great Creator.

Mulungu is also regarded as the agent in anything mysterious. "It's uvelingu," is the Yao exclamation on being shown anything that is beyond the range of his understanding. The rainbow is always "uvelingu," although some Yaos have begun to use the Mang'anja term "utta wa Lesa," bow of Leza.

Offerings are made to the spirit world or to uvelingu as the great agency in the affairs of human life. Outside the village, or beside the headman's hut, may often be seen a rough shed. In this are placed the first-fruits of the new crop,

777

777 LUCK AND CHANCE—concept of good and bad luck, ideas about chance and probability, things associated with good or bad luck (e. g., lucky objects, luck-bringing formulae, lucky and unlucky numbers, propitious and unlucky days), techniques for controlling luck (e. g., wearing of luck amulets, reciting of lucky formulae), conception of fate, etc. *See also:*

Gambling	795	Divination	131
Parapsychology	133	Fortune-telling	133
Probability theory	519.2	Numbers, Mystical	133.3
Psychology of accidents	614.8	Scientific theory of chance	519.2

as he climbs a tree with his hook to the trunk; at the top he lunges by his legs and looks down on the crowd, his assistants doing the same. Coming down he runs to his hut; throwing his "tail" into the air and catching it again, he enters.

This is about nine a.m.; all past till about eleven o'clock, the well-concealed resting food cooked by their mothers in the shelters. About eleven o'clock, the n'minkilo takes a big gourd and putting his "tails" into it covered with a native cloth, gives it to his assistant who carries it on his head and follows him to a pool of water, accompanied by all the women except any young ones who have not borne children. He invites them to go "crab-hunting."

At the pool he enters the water with his assistants round him, except the assistant with the gourd, who stands on the bank. The n'minkilo makes movements as of hunting for crabs in the water singing:

"Chimwapala mpelili mpeli mwapa mwanse"
"There must be hunting otherwise I should have had to eat porridge my without relish!"

He pretends to catch a crab and his hands are immediately grasped by his assistants in the water who all help him to convey it to the ground as the "tail" is taken out of it.

The crowd then returns to *Lupanda* to enact the *nambanda* ceremony. *Nambanda* is a representation of an animal made of bark on a frame-work covered with coat and painted with four in spiral markings, hence the name (*mbanda* is a part of a spiral shell from the Zambezi coast much prized by natives as an ornament). The animal is really the noble antelope with horns and the n'minkilo's "tails" in place; there is a man inside it. It is made perhaps a mile away and then brought near to *Lupanda* and placed in a cleared area.

The n'minkilo on his return from crab-hunting has gone into his hut and put on his full regalia; then, accompanied by his drummers, he comes out and is immediately followed by the men and the rest of the crowd; knowing where the *nambanda* will be put, he leads the people in the opposite direction calling out to them to look out for the antelope. They, of course, all look in the wrong direction, so when he knows *nambanda* is in place, he whistles around and sings, "There is the animal!"

In the old days the chief was present for this, a platform being built for him. When the *nambanda* appeared, he gave his hunters much powder (no bullets) and they shot at the animal. The animal would fall as if hit and the n'minkilo would approach to claim it as his beast, but it would promptly get up and charge, to be driven off by the crowd, whereupon it would run away into the bush.

Lots are then cast by the n'minkilo, using a tortoise shell stuffed with medicine. The men all stand in a circle with their numbers behind them, while the n'minkilo goes to the leader and throws the tortoise at the boy's chest. If it sticks there, all is well and he pretends to rush boy. Should the shell not stick on the boy's chest, it portends ill-luck to that individual and he has to be dealt with further. The n'minkilo, holding his "tail," and his assistant holding a horn of medicine, stand back to back, with the boy between

[51] While the wali thus march solemnly along shaking their wands, the assistants begin singing:

"Ku village initiated"
"To the gate they have shut"

[52] [53] to which the wali reply:

"Kuenu headquarter"
"There is no place where to pass"

The n'wisitela remains at *Luyanda* till everyone else has left; he then sets fire to the shelters and leaving without looking back, runs to overtake the procession and then leads it on towards the village still at a slow pace, while all around is a yelling crowd of delighted mothers and other relatives and the assistants and drummers, all singing and shouting.

When the outskirts of the village are reached, the n'wisitela halts and waits for the *chief* to come out and give them permission to enter. The *chief* brings saliva which unrolled on the ground measures the length of the procession of wali. Headed now by their leader, the wali walk over this saliva, while the assistants roll it up behind them for the n'wisitela, as it is part of his payment. Flour may be brought him at the same time, carried by the chief's wives.

At an Unyago I witnessed at Kwinjonse's, the halt was called on the bank of a stream at the edge of the village where a bamboo arch had been erected. The arrival of Chief Malenya at this point with saliva and flour was the sign for a demonstration by his young men who ran forward as if in battle, firing off blank rounds from old Tower muskets and executing a kind of war dance.

After the saliva has been handed over, the *chief* returns to his kraal and the procession continues into the village, across the village open space to the house round the chief's house. There, the wali enter by a gateway and disperse over the courtyard where they find their sleeping-mats laid out ready for them by their mothers. The n'wisitela lays his "tail" on the leader's mat to bring good luck thereafter. With Mkwanda, there is no further part for the wali, but in some cases they are called upon by the *chief* to give an exhibition of their dancing and drumming. The wali sleep that night in the kraal and disperse the following day.

[77] In the morning, the n'wisitela takes his "tail" and a stirring stick made from a millet stalk with the roots on it, and strikes the ground at points in a row in front of the chief's house. Here the pots of beer which have been prepared are placed in rows, those chosen by the *chief* and those chosen by the n'wisitela, and drinking commences. The n'wisitela, before he joins in, takes the wali to an ash-heap in the village and there sprinkles them with medicine from a grain-mortar after which they go with their shaumwi behind a house and change into new clothes. They then go and salute the *chief* by clapping their hands and depart to their villages, duly initiated and somewhat subdued by what they have been through. Their new names as "men" may be given them by the shaumwi either at *Luyanda* [272] [274] [553] or after the return to the village.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

Tingalinga was another well-known performer; he used to do the same tricks as Kambanja. He also was possessed of an elastic skin and is said to have been able "to tie his ears together behind the back of his head." 789 791

Mpechetula, a Yao of Mkanda, is a man with considerable renown. He is said to be able to produce a lion at will from a lion's tail and claw. He would offer to show this if there were any brave enough to go through with it. On a moonlight night, he would expose on the ground in a cleared space near a village the tail of a lion held cross-wise in a piece of split bamboo. At the split end of the bamboo, he would place a lion's claw and round this, a woman's belt held in position by three bamboo pegs, around which he would draw a circle of mkepesi flour. Everyone would then withdraw to a hut in which the seance was to take place. After an hour or so, Mpechetula would send some one out to inspect the lion's tail where probably all would be found intact. He might then pretend to be uninterested and sleepy and suggest that some one should go out again in half an hour. Sooner or later, a man would come back, having found the tail gone; then everyone would go out to see what had happened. The pegs would be found in place but the tail and claw gone. A little way off, the split piece of bamboo would be found and further still a bead or two from the woman's belt. These, Mpechetula would pick up, and leaving a little trail of flour on their way, all returned to the hut, while he whistled as if calling some one. Suddenly they would be aroused by the sound as of a lion brushing against the hut walls, as the beasts are known to do, and next, a loud roar. Mpechetula would immediately open the door half-way so that the people could look out into the moonlight and there, a little way off, would be the lion. It would immediately advance towards the house and then, as it prepared to spring for the door, Mpechetula would offer it some of the flour in his left hand, armed with a stirring-stick, mtiko, in his right hand. As the lion landed, he would strike it on the head with the stick and lo and behold! the lion would vanish and the tail and claw would be found in his hand.

Superstitions. Scattered throughout these notes, particularly under *Uswezi* and *Disease*, mention is made of practices which show a strong belief in superstition. Below are given a number of minor beliefs, and it is interesting to compare them with many well-known superstitions in other parts of the world. 771 784

1. A child who cuts the upper incisor teeth first will be unlucky. Such children used to be killed by the Yao. (Other tribes make medicine against the threatened ill-luck.) [777] ●

2. A woman with polydactylism may not take food out of a corn-store. Otherwise the stock of corn will not last long. (Rudimentary sixth fingers are not uncommon.) [832]

3. An insect called *chisyesye masi* which lives in the mud at the bottom of pools, if killed causes the water to dry up. [823]

4. If a boy puts a water-spider in the armpit when learning to swim, he will learn quickly.

5. A man wishing to prevent rain falling on a day he is making a journey, will wrap some of the leaves of the *mtowesi* tree in his loin cloth and go without drinking. [824]

3:Stanmus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

19. That portion of the gut of animals having folds of mucus membrane inside, may be eaten only by old people past the child-propagating age. If a young woman should eat it, she would have difficulty in labor.

20. It is believed that people who eat too freely of a little fish like whitebait called *matemba* get obstruction of the bowel by the wedging together of the bones. The treatment adopted is to pass up the rectum a smooth stick with a pad of rag at the end. This cannot be done by the person himself and so the aid of another has to be called in; only an intimacy, such as the relationship of brother-in-law gives, will warrant this service being asked.

21. The Yao believe that there is a little insect which lives in the ear, called *chinyeme kpikewile*, which tells the person what is said to him, the wax in the ear being its excrement. The pupil is called *mwanache jwa liso*, the child of the eye.

22. Among women, the uterus is called *nawuso* (*maso* = eyes); it is supposed to be a little person who holds the foetus. When the child is born, *nawuso* cannot find it and starts looking about, the movements causing the afterpains.

23. A man making his first journey to the coast used to sprinkle himself with water from every stream he crossed to give him a safe journey. In the same way, women at the present day going between Zomba and Blantyre sprinkle their babies with water from each stream.

24. An ant-like insect called *ndupetumbe* (*tumbetumbe*, Chin.) [*Anoplolabris rupbistis*] is lucky. On seeing it a native pats its belly and then rubs his own, wishing for plenty of food that day. If he is embarking on a journey or beginning some enterprise, he will wrap one of these insects in a fold of his loin cloth and take it with him for luck.

25. When a native hears the *mwiye* bird call (its call is like the mew of a cat), if he wants something, he immediately says, "Oh *mwiye*, I want so-and-so. Be quiet and I will then be quiet, too!" If the bird ceases calling, he knows the wish will be granted. The female bird is said to be the more certain prophet.

26. The snake, *nahukuti*, which lives in trees and is of a buff clay color with green markings, is said by natives to pierce the chest and tie a knot in itself on each side so that it can only be withdrawn by cutting off one knot. When the snake is thus withdrawn, its blood mixes with that of the man and he will die.

27. Natives have a habit of marking the spot where any event takes place by a stone by the side of the path, and every passer-by will add a stone for luck. In this way some large piles of stones have been made.

28. A man resting on his way home from a long journey places a stone in the fork between the branches of a nearby tree, so that on his arrival he may find his wife has put by some food for him and has not used up the day's stock of flour.

29. A chameleon found digging in the path is said to presage the death of the finder's nearest relative.

3: Stanzas D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

no one will touch. With the exception of carrion birds such as the crow and the hawk, most birds are considered fit to eat. The hornbill is not eaten, as it is supposed to carry part of a corpse on its nose.[1] Fowls form a regular article of diet, but some taboos in this connection are mentioned elsewhere.

Eggs are eaten only by children and old people; that is, by those outside the child propagating age. *Milk* is never consumed in any form. They say, "What a disgusting habit, to suck the juice of an animal while it is still alive!"

Pregnant women will not eat certain things lest the child be born with some deformity, such as the snout of a pig, or the white stripes of a zebra.

Art and decoration. Sculpture can hardly be said to be an art known to the Yao. The only piece of stone work I have ever seen was a granite boulder, on the surface of which cup-holes had been made for the game of *Bao* (Pl. IV, fig. 4).

Of late years, individuals here and there have begun carving wooden figures of men and animals. The Yao, of course, make no idols. It is uncertain exactly how long it is since any of these people started producing wooden figures. I should think that this art has sprung up within the past twelve or thirteen years, that is to say, since there has been a market for them among European residents. In the first place only natives and some of the common animals, the eland and leopard, were represented; since then, many animals and Europeans have been copied. The native is extraordinarily clever in reproducing characteristic features in dress, etc., so that a Portuguese is easily distinguished from an Englishman. The little models in ivory of animals and native household objects, made by the Swahili people on Lake Nyasa, have never been copied by the Yao. Neither do they make clay images of men and cattle as do the Zulu-descended Angoni and cattle-keeping Wankonde. No native would allow any wooden figure to remain in his house for fear of ill luck; the women especially would look askance at them, fearing some misfortune in their next pregnancy. Little wooden figures of birds, however, are sometimes seen affixed to the point of the hut roof.

The making of carved figures, then, is of recent introduction, or rather is a recent event in the evolution of the Yao, as they were not taught but self-inspired in the work.

The ability to make representations of objects by drawing appears in the same way to originate spontaneously here and there as a sport. Natives with a talent for drawing are found among all the tribes, and among the Yao, it is said, there have always been some who have been able to draw. Naturally enough, their reproductions are made on the walls of their houses, and their subjects are generally animals of the forest, sometimes men and houses, or some other object of particular interest[2] (Pl. VIII, fig. 1). I also give sketches of some other drawings I have noted (Pl. XVIII); the fine figure of a man at Makanjila's

[1] Vide supra, p. 337.

[2] Cf. A. Werner, 'A Native Painting from Nyasaland,' *Journ. Afric. Soc.*, London 1910, vol. ix, no. 36, p. 399-402).